



A Year Down Yonder (Newbery Medal Book)

By Richard Peck

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Winner of the Newbery Medal

“Peck charms readers once again with this entertaining sequel to *A Long Way from Chicago*”—*School Library Journal* (starred review)

It was within the pages of **Richard Peck's** Newbery Honor-winning **A Long Way from Chicago** that Mary Alice and Grandma Dowdel first made their captivating debut. Now they're back for more astonishing, laugh-out-loud tales when fifteen-year-old Mary Alice moves in with her spicy grandmother for the year. Expect moonlit schemes, romances both foiled and founded, and a whole parade of fools made to suffer in unusual (and always hilarious) ways.

Wise, exuberant, and slyly heartwarming, this is a satisfying companion to Grandma Dowdel's adventures in **A Long Way from Chicago** and **A Season of Gifts**.

Newbery Medal Winner

ALA Best Book for Young Adults

ALA Notable Book

Booklist Best Books of the Year

School Library Journal Best Books of the Year

New York Times Best Seller

“Audience members will breathe a sigh of regret when the eventful year "down yonder" draws to a close.”—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

“Wit, gentleness, and outrageous farce.”—*Booklist* (starred review)

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A Year Down Yonder (Newbery Medal Book) By Richard Peck Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Grandma Dowdel's back! She's just as feisty and terrifying and goodhearted as she was in Richard Peck's *A Long Way from Chicago*, and every bit as funny. In the first book, a Newbery Honor winner, Grandma's rampages were seen through the eyes of her grandson Joey, who, with his sister, Mary Alice, was sent down from Chicago for a week every summer to visit. But now it's 1937 and Joey has gone off to work for the Civilian Conservation Corps, while 15-year-old Mary Alice has to go stay with Grandma alone--for a whole year, maybe longer. From the very first moment when she arrives at the depot clutching her Philco portable radio and her cat, Bootsie, Mary Alice knows it won't be easy. And it's not. She has to sleep alone in the attic, attend a hick town school where in spite of her worn-out coat she's "the rich girl from Chicago," and be an accomplice in Grandma's outrageous schemes to run the town her own way--and do good while nobody's looking. But being Grandma's sidekick is always interesting, and by the end of the year, Mary Alice has grown to see the formidable love in the heart of her formidable Grandma.

Peck is at his best with these hilarious stories that rest solidly within the American literary tradition of Mark Twain and Bret Harte. Teachers will cherish them as great read-alouds, and older teens will gain historical perspective from this lively picture of the depression years in small-town America. (Ages 12 and older) --
Patty Campbell

From Publishers Weekly

In this hilarious and poignant sequel to *A Long Way to Chicago*, Peck once again shows that country life is anything but boring. Chicago-bred Mary Alice (who has previously weathered annual week-long visits with Grandma Dowdel) has been sentenced to a year-long stay in rural Illinois with her irrepressible, rough and gruff grandmother, while Joey heads west with the Civilian Conservation Corps, and her parents struggle to get back on their feet during the 1937 recession. Each season brings new adventures to 15-year-old Mary Alice as she becomes Grandma's partner in crime, helping to carry out madcap schemes to benefit friends and avenge enemies. Around Halloween, for example, the woman, armed with wire, a railroad spike and a bucket of glue, outsmarts a gang of pranksters bent on upturning her privy. Later on, she proves just as apt at squeezing change out of the pockets of skinflints, putting prim and proper DAR ladies in their place and arranging an unlikely match between a schoolmarm and a WPA artist of nude models. Between antic capers, Peck reveals a marshmallow heart inside Grandma's rock-hard exterior and adroitly exposes the mutual, unspoken affection she shares with her granddaughter. Like Mary Alice, audience members will breathe a sigh of regret when the eventful year "down yonder" draws to a close. Ages 10-up. (Oct.)

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From School Library Journal

Grade 5-8-Peck charms readers once again with this entertaining sequel to *A Long Way from Chicago* (Dial, 1998). This time, 15-year-old Mary Alice visits Grandma Dowdel alone for a one-year stay, while her parents struggle through the recession of 1937 looking for jobs and better housing. With her older brother, Joey, working out west in a government program, Mary Alice takes a turn at recounting memorable and pivotal moments of her year with Grandma. Beneath the woman's fierce independence and nonconformity, Mary Alice discovers compassion, humor, and intuition. She watches her grandmother exact the perfect revenge on a classmate who bullies her on the first day of school, and she witnesses her "shameless" tactics to solicit donations from Veteran's Day "burgoo" eaters whose contributions are given to Mrs. Abernathy's blind, paralyzed, war-veteran son. From her energetic, eccentric, but devoted Grandma, she learns not only how to cook but also how to deal honestly and fairly with people. At story's end, Mary Alice returns several

years later to wed the soldier, Royce McNabb, who was her classmate during the year spent with Grandma. Again, Peck has created a delightful, insightful tale that resounds with a storyteller's wit, humor, and vivid description. Mary Alice's memories capture the atmosphere, attitudes, and lifestyle of the times while shedding light on human strengths and weaknesses.

Gerry Larson, Durham School of the Arts, NC
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Eduardo Baro:

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Sandy Holiday:

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Miguel Ross:

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Danny Jarosz:

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